

Appl. No. 10/712,239
Docket No. 9103M
Amdt. dated January 17, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed on October 17, 2006
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 1-11 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

Claims 12-18 have been withdrawn as a result of an earlier restriction requirement.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a) Over DOBRIN et al. (US 6,383,431 B1)

Claims 1-11 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over DOBRIN. This rejection was addressed in the response to the previous Office Action. According to the latest Office Action, the arguments presented therein were not persuasive.

Applicants had previously amended independent claim 1 to claim the second region comprises a strained region forming a protruding element and argued that the secondary reference of SMITH reveals no reference to a strained region forming a protruding element locked by a reinforcing means selected from the group consisting of thermal bonding, chemical bonding, ionic bonding, adhesive bonding and combinations thereof. According to the Office Action the primary reference of DOBRIN et al. provides a similar texturing method that includes incremental stretching similar to that described by the present invention that produced similar protruding elements. The Office Action relies on the secondary reference of SMITH to further provide the material of DOBRIN et al. with a reinforcing means by way of thermal bonding to enhance the wiping and cleaning efficiency of the material of DOBRIN et al. According to the Office Action, the strained region is present in the primary reference of DOBRIN et al. and relies on SMITH et al. to provide the material with thermal bonding.

Applicants continue to traverse this rejection because the combination of Dobrin and Smith does not result in the claimed invention. Column 3, lines 31-45 of SMITH describes embossed, compacted fibrous areas which lie in planes of substantially parallel top and bottom surfaces of a nonwoven fabric. These compacted areas of SMITH are compressed as opposed to being strained. Therefore, contrary to the Office Action, the combination of Dobrin and Smith does not result in "a strained region forming a protruding element locked by a reinforcing means" as claimed. Consequently, the

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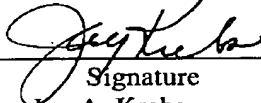
combination of DOBRIN and SMITH does not teach all of the limitations of claim 1 or claims 2-11 depending therefrom.

Conclusion

This response represents an earnest effort to place the application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of this application, entry of the amendment presented herein, and allowance of claims 1-11 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY

By 
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Date: January 17, 2007
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